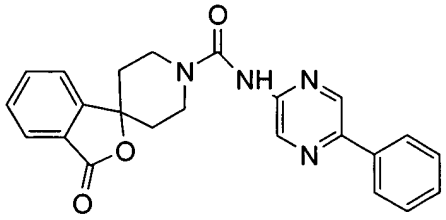
Please amend the application as follows:

Amendments to the Claims

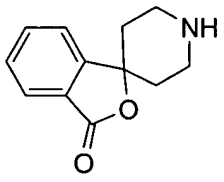
This listing of Claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of Claims in the application:

1. (amended) A process for preparing a compound of formula I:

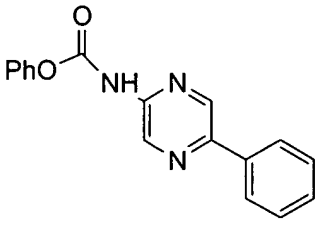


I

comprising coupling a compound of formula II with a compound of formula III in the presence of an organic base selected from the group consisting of NBu_3, Me_2NBu and Me_2NBn in a solvent system selected from the group consisting of MeCN, MeCN/water and DMF/water.



II



III

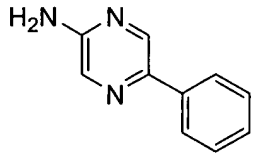
2. (canceled)

3. (canceled)

4. (amended) The process of Claim 1 further comprising the step of combining 2-amino-5-phenylpyrazine (IV) and phenyl chloroformate in ~~an organic solvent system~~ MeCN to yield the compound of formula III.

5. (canceled)

6. (amended) ~~The~~ A process for preparing a compound of formula III ~~of Claim 4 further~~ comprising the step of combining 2-amino-5-bromopyrazine (V) and phenyl boronic acid in an organic solvent system in the presence of a catalyst to yield the compound of formula IV.

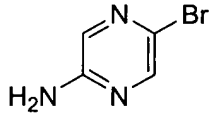


IV

7. (original) The process of Claim 6 wherein the catalyst is selected from the group consisting of $PdCl_2$·dppf·CH_2Cl_2, $Pd(PPh_3)_4$, $Pd(OAc)/PPh_3$, $Cl_2Pd[(Pet_3)]_2$, $Pd(DIPHOS)_2$, $Cl_2Pd(Bipy)$, $[PdCl(Ph_2PCH_2PPh_2)]_2$, $Cl_2Pd[P(o\text{-}tol)_3]_2$, $Pd_2(dba)_3/P(o\text{-}tol)_3$, $Pd_2(dba)/P(furyl)_3$, $Cl_2Pd[P(furyl)_3]_2$, $Cl_2Pd(PMePh_2)_2$, $Cl_2Pd[P(4\text{-}F\text{-}Ph)_3]_2$, $Cl_2Pd[P(C_6F_6)_3]_2$, $Cl_2Pd[P(_2\text{-}COOH\text{-}Ph)(Ph)_2]_2$, $Cl_2Pd[P(4\text{-}COOH\text{-}Ph)(Ph)_2]_2$.

8. (original) The process of Claim 7 wherein the catalyst is selected from the group consisting of $PdCl_2$·dppf·CH_2Cl_2, $Pd(PPh_3)_4$, $Cl_2Pd[P(4\text{-}F\text{-}Ph)_3]_2$, $Cl_2Pd[P(4\text{-}COOH\text{-}Ph)(Ph)_2]_2$.

9. (original) The process of Claim 6 further comprising the step of combining 2-aminopyrazine and a bromination agent to yield the compound of formula V.



V

10. (original) The process of Claim 9 wherein the bromination agent is selected from the group consisting of Br_2, NBS, Bu_4NBr_3, N-bromo acetamide and 1,3-dibromo-5,5-dimethylhydantoin.

11. (original) The process of Claim 10 wherein the bromination agent is selected from the group consisting of NBS and 1,3-dibromo-5,5-dimethylhydantoin.